

THE CORK TREE.

Growth, Stripping and Preparation of Its Bark.

The methods in vogue in barking and harvesting the cork in Spain and Portugal are pretty much the same. The barking operation is effected when the tree has acquired sufficient strength to withstand the rough handling it receives during this operation, which takes place when it has attained the fifteenth year of its growth. After the first stripping the tree is left in this state to regenerate, subsequent stripplings being effected at intervals of not less than three years, and under this process the tree will continue to thrive and bear for upward of 100 years. If the bark is not removed artificially, it will on maturity split and disintegrate itself. This is caused by the fresh growth of bark coming in underneath.

The cork of the first barking is termed *córcho bórno*—born, or virgin cork. The cork of the second stripping is called *pega*, or secondary cork. The work of removing the bark from the tree is performed in summer by the men, who are paid at the rate of 25 cts. a day. The instruments used for the work are an ax, a lever and a hand saw for the cutting of transversal sections. The first process through which the bark passes after stripping is that of boiling. This is sometimes done in the woods, but more frequently in the cork factory, in large, specially constructed caldrons, in which the bark is left to boil for upward of an hour. This seething process increases the thickness and elasticity of the cork and at the same time the tannin and other feculent substances generally existing in the bark are desiccated.—London Queen.

Honey in Madagascar.

Among the observances of the fan-drum, or New Year's festival, in Madagascar is the eating of mingled rice and honey by the queen and her guests. In the same country honey is placed in the sacred water of sprinkling used at the blessing of small children. Ancient religious ceremonies of the heathen frequently employed honey, but it was forbidden as a sacrifice in the Jewish ritual. With milk or water it was presented by the Greeks as a libation to the dead. A honey cake was the monthly food of the fabled serpent guardian of the acropolis of Athens. Pagan aborigines offered honey to the sun.

The First Business Woman.

We don't generally associate the Bible with business matters, but if you were told to name the first business woman mentioned in the Bible what would you say?

It was Pharaoh's daughter, because she took a prophet out of water.—New York Times.

Most people when they buy experience don't get a bargain.—Somerville Journal.

Knots and Miles.

One of the things which it seems difficult for the public mind to grasp is that there is a decided difference between the knot and the mile. It is certainly about time to have it thoroughly understood that the two are not the same thing. It seems easy enough to remember that a mile is only about 87 per cent of a knot, the latter being approximately 6,082 feet in length, while the statute mile measures 5,280 feet. Three and one-half miles are equal, within a small fraction, to three knots. The result of this difference, of course, is that the speed of a vessel in miles per hour is always considerably larger than when stated in knots, and the confusion of the terms sometimes gives rise to rather remarkable claims of speed performance. When a twenty knot ship, for example, is lightly mentioned, it should be remembered that this really means a little over twenty-three miles. Similarly with higher figures, which are often glibly enough stated, the difference between the terms is worth bearing in mind. It will help to guard against the forming of ridiculous estimates of a vessel's capabilities.

Cow Pony Ahead of Pilgrims.

The cow pony is of distinguished lineage. His ancestral home was among the Moors of Barbary, and his pedigree reads back to the "Godolphin Arabian." Innocently associated with the Spanish invasion of Mexico his race was already established on the plains of the southwest when the Mayflower landed. In the centuries that followed he conformed his nature to the requirements of the plains until he fitted them as the camel fits the desert, and became so perfectly adapted to the work of the cattle range as to make it doubtful whether the needs of the cowboy evolved the cow pony or the capacities of the pony produced the cowboy.—Country Life in America.

Is Life Worth Living?

Those people who say that life is not worth living find it so because they do not go to work to make it worth living. Why does sadness overpower them? Is it so much harder for them than for others to see sin and suffering? What right have they to add their weight to the world's burdens? Is it a sign of intellect to be cowardly? And do these people not dream that the spiritual power which makes such an intellectual condition impossible is vastly superior to any power that the intellect alone can attain.—Elizabeth Peabody.

Authorship as a Profession.

Nobody should write who is not firmly possessed of the idea that he has a vocation for literature and is not willing to endure the penalties of art for the sake of serving an art. If a person who writes in that spirit makes a living he earns it. If he makes a fortune he deserves it.—New York Times.

MOURNING CUSTOMS.

Origin of the Widow's Cap and Black Sleeve Bands.

The customs of mourning as practiced in various parts of the world seem at first sight to have little relation with each other or with the inward grief which they are supposed to typify. Yet by the exercise of a little patience many resemblances may be discovered among them. The widow's cap, for example, dates back to the days of ancient Egypt. Egyptian men shaved the head and head as a token of mourning. The women, instead of cutting off the hair, concealed it by a close cap. The Romans, who were as a race clean shaven, shaved the head in mourning and wore a wig. The black band on the sleeve as a sign of mourning comes to us from the days of chivalry. The lady tied a scarf or napkin, as the handkerchief was called, about the arm of her knight. If he was killed in battle she wore the band in memory of him.

Black has so long been the color of grief in Anglo-Saxon countries that it seems a part of the upside down civilization of the east that Japan and China wear white. But no longer ago than the time of Elizabeth the unfortunate Mary of Scotland wore white on the death of Darnley. Even now the hearse used for children is white, and in England the mourners at funerals of young unmarried persons wear hatbands and sashes of white.

A queer English custom is that of decorating the black hearse horses with long false black tails. They attract no more notice on a street in Liverpool than do the black nets used in this country to cover the horses.

A great many sensible people protest that wearing tokens of mourning is a barbaric custom that should be abolished or greatly modified, but when loss and grief actually come into the individual life one discovers that there is a strange, subtle fitness in gloomy garments and that they answer to the need of the soul for silence and separation.

A Balty Mule.

It is stated on the authority of officers in the Confederate army that a balty mule decided the battle of Gettysburg. The southern and northern troops were both attempting to reach an eminence the position of which practically decided the battle, and the southern column was blocked by a balty mule just long enough to enable the northern troops to gain the eminence, and so that balty mule really decided the battle.

Luck or Good Management.

"I heard Crabbe say he had never had such luck in his business as he's having now, but I didn't understand whether it was good luck or bad."

"Oh, he meant bad luck, of course! If it were good luck he wouldn't speak of it as 'luck' at all."—Philadelphia Ledger.

NELSON'S FIGHTING MEN.

Had Few Pleasures and Faced Death With a Jest.

Of the "wooden walls of England," the great sailing ships in which Admiral Nelson won his victories, and of the men who worked them, a critic writes: "Though beautiful to behold and terrible to fight with, those old men-of-war were more often than not abodes of tyranny and wretchedness. The violence of the press gangs, which seized men of all ages and occupations, was but a prelude to the oppression that followed. Decent men were herded indiscriminately with ruffians, the rights of free born Englishmen were rudely snatched from them—for them thenceforward there was no law save the will of the captain and the dread articles of war. Shore going leave was nonexistent, the food was atrocious and scanty, punishments were barbarous, and the only thing served out with any liberality was rum, on which the men got drunk and then were flogged for that offense at the gratings next morning."

In Nelson's time the seaman had few pleasures save the prospect of a hot fight and his daily pint of rum. But to these must be added the vainglorious satisfaction he took in his clothes. When rigged out in his best he frequently wore rings in his ears and silver buckles on his low shoes, his short blue jacket would be decorated with gold buttons and colored ribbons sewed down the seams to give an additional gaiety, his waistcoat might be red or emerald, and a black silk handkerchief would be knotted loosely round his throat. As the finishing touch his hair would be hanging in a cue down his back. The broad collars were first worn as a protection against the grease and pomatum used in dressing the pigtail.

But all these fripperies were discarded when the guns were cast loose from their lashings and the linestocks were lighted. It was the custom of the men when going into action to strip to the waist. They took their black silk handkerchiefs and bound them very tightly round their heads over their ears, so that the roar of the guns might not deafen them for life. It was remarked that men going into action always wore a sullen frown, however merry they were in their talk.

Methods followed in that day were curiously primitive and tedious, but the results were undoubtedly satisfactory save to the nameless and numberless sailors who met grim death on the black and blood stained decks or in the dark horrors of the cockpit. That those hardy and careless men often faced death or disablement with a jest or a cheer only renders their unconscious heroism the more impressive.—Chicago News.

A curiosity in the shape of a puff ball as big as a man's head is on exhibition in a store at Bowdoinham, Me.

ETIQUETTE AMONG PEERS.

Rules Laid Down to Preserve the Dignity of Their Chamber.

Besides insisting upon all due respect to themselves the peers suffer no disrespect to the stately gilded chamber in which they are accustomed to assemble. Even when parliament is not in session none but members are allowed to be covered there. Not even the oldest son of any peer may wear his hat in the room. "Neither is any person to stay there, nor any attendant on any nobleman but while he brings in his lord, and then he is to retire himself."

In 1703 official notice was taken of the fact that of late the doorkeepers have frequently presumed to come within the doors when the house is sitting, and it was therefore ordered that for the future this liberty be forbidden. Another point in which the peers are scrupulous to preserve their dignity is revealed in the standing order with reference to conferences between the two houses.

It sets forth that "the place of our meeting with the lower house upon conference is usually the painted chamber, where they are commonly before we come and expect our leisure. We are to come thither in a whole body and not some lords scattering before the rest, which both takes from the gravity of the lords and besides may hinder the lords from taking their proper places. We are to sit there and be covered, but they are not at any committee or conference either to be covered or sit down in our presence unless it be some inferior person and that by connivance in a corner out of sight, to sit, but not to be covered."

Although never rescinded, this regulation is now practically obsolete.—Chambers' Journal.

Christmas a Lucky Birthday.

There is an old superstition that to be born on Christmas day is to be lucky all one's life, and in Silesia there is a belief that a boy born on Christmas day must be brought up a lawyer or he will become a thief.

The Origin of Christmas Greens.

At the Saturnalia, the heathen prototype of Christmas, it was the Roman custom to decorate the house with evergreens. This was done to give the woodland spirits a refuge from the cold.

Christmas Island.

Christmas Island, in the Pacific ocean, and Christmas mountain, on the Antarctic continent, were so named because discovered on the 25th of December.

The Point of View.

"Henry, if I were a young man like you and expected to have to make my own way in the world some day I should try to make my expenses come within my income."

"Father, if I were as rich as you are and had only one son I'd try to bring his income up to his expenses."—Chicago Tribune.

ODD DERIVATIONS.

Curious History of the Word "Vote." How "Reticule" Got Its Name.

"Vote" is a word with a curious history. To the Roman a "votum" was a solemn promise made to a deity. From the solemn promise itself the meaning of "votum" gradually became the prayer or intense wish that accompanied the promise and then any intense wish whatever. So far the development proceeded in Latin, and "vote" passed into English with the same sense. When Ben Jonson wrote of "public votes" to heaven he meant not mass meeting resolutions, but prayers. Finally "vote" acquired its present meaning, the formal and emphatic expression of a wish, while the old sense remains with its double "vow."

That openwork bag for shopping, called a reticule, gets its name directly from the Latin "reticulum," "little net." Popularly, however, the word is supposed to owe its existence to the fact that when an Englishwoman visited the first Paris exhibition with her little bag in her hand the Parisians cried "Ridicule!" The Englishwoman, misunderstanding the exclamation, is said to have thought it the correct translation of "little bag" and returned to England calling it a "reticule."

Philologists claim that the phrase to "sleep like a top" comes from the French "dormir comme une taupe," to sleep like a mole. It is said, too, that Cinderella's slippers were not made of glass, but of "vair," the old French word for ermine, which in time became corrupted into "verre," glass.—Chicago News.

A Shoe That Altered History.

After the fall of Anne Boleyn the pope prepared overtures of reconciliation so favorable to King Henry VIII. that he determined to accept them. A representative was sent from Rome with the dispatches, and when within a day's journey from Calais his horse cast a shoe and fell lame. As it was a favorite, the messenger determined to wait a day that the poor animal might rest and recover. Next day the journey was resumed, but on the day that London was reached Henry had been married to Jane Seymour, a Protestant, Anne had been beheaded, and all hope of reconciliation with the papacy was at an end. The cast shoe had thus changed the bent of English church history.

A Letter From Europe.

Mrs. Struckoll-Paw, Emmy writes that the most interesting thing she's seen in the hull trip is the Sphinx; says she just loves it. Mr. Struckoll-Well, you write to Emmy to buy it and fetch it home with her. Like to see one of them darn things myself!—Brooklyn Life.

Zigzag Heredity.

"Whom do your two little boys resemble, Mrs. Flitter?"

"Well, the homely boy looks like his father and acts like me, and the pretty one looks like me and acts like his father."—Life.

THE "DIVINE STORM."

Fearful Typhoon That Saved Japan From a Chinese Invasion.

About 600 years ago Japan was threatened with an invasion from continental Asia, much as England was threatened with invasion by the Spaniards. The beaten Spanish armada was dispersed by a storm, and Japan was delivered in much the same way, but without an engagement. A Japanese writer, Okakura Yoshisaburo, says: "The mighty Kublai, grandson of the great Genghis Khan, haughty with his resistless army, whose devastating intrepidity taught even Europe to tremble at the mention of his name, dispatched an embassy to the Japanese court to demand the subjection of the country. The message was indignantly dismissed. Enraged at this, Kublai equipped a large number of vessels with the choicest soldiers China could furnish. The invading force was successful at first and committed massacres in Iki and Tsushima, islands lying between Korea and Japan. The position was menacing. Even the steel nerves of the trained samurai felt that strange thrill a patriot knows. Shinto priests and Buddhist monks were busy at their prayers."

"A tremendous Chinese fleet gathered in the bolstorous bay of Genkai in the summer of 1281. At last the evening came with the ominous glow on the horizon that foretells an approaching storm. It was the plan of the conquering army victoriously to land the next morning on the holy soil of Kyushu. But during this critical night a fearful typhoon, known to this day as the 'divine storm,' arose, breaking the jet black sky with its tremendous roar of thunder and bathing the glittering armor of our soldiers guarding the coast line in white flashes of dazzling light. The very heaven and earth shook before the mighty anger of nature."

"Dawn of the next morning saw the whole fleet of the proud Yuan that had darkened the water for miles swept completely away into the bottomless sea of Genkai, to the great relief of the horror stricken populace and to the unspeakable disappointment of our determined soldiers. Out of the 100,000 warriors who manned the invading ships only three are recorded to have survived the destruction to tell the dismal tale to their crestfallen great khan."

A Business Talk.

"Miss de Simpson," said the young secretary of legation, "I have opened negotiations with your father upon the subject of—er—coming to see you oftener with a view ultimately to forming an alliance, and he has responded favorably. May I ask if you will ratify the arrangement as a *modus vivendi*?"

"Mr. von Harris," answered the daughter of the eminent diplomat, "don't you think it would have been a more graceful recognition of my administrative entity if you had asked me first?"—Chicago Tribune.



J. H. YELVERTON, JR.

House Furnishings of all Kinds,

Rugs, Lamps, Chairs, Tables, Pictures, etc.



If you can find an assortment of Crockery and China in the city equal to ours you will find that their prices are at least one-third more.

SANTA CLAUS

Has Provided a Bountiful Assortment of Good Things Suitable for CHRISTMAS GIFTS

AT

YELVERTON'S

Toys, China, Furniture, Stoves, Crockery.

Our Lamps are light enough in price to suit the slimest pocket book, and of design and quality beautiful and good enough to suit the most refined taste.

Every woman likes to see nice Dining Room Furniture. It shows refinement. We are showing this week a Handsome lot of China Closets, Dining Tables, Side Boards and Buffets. We have them in several prices, all astonishingly Low when High Grade Goods are considered. Come in and see, even if you don't buy.